

Secrets of Black Forest giants

By Bernard L. Minetti

At a meeting of the Palmer Lake Historical Society on Sept. 20, Terry Stokka, naturalist, historian and pine tree lover from Black Forest, provided a semi-scientific overview of the lodgepole pine trees and the giant ponderosa pines indigenous to that area.

Stokka explained that the trees require sunlight, water, soil, and time to evolve to great size and beauty. He noted that Black Forest has an abundance of sunshine but a dearth of water. The temperatures are relatively cool. An environmental venue of this makeup is fundamentally good for the health and sustenance of these two types of pine trees.

Stokka said that from the bark inward, several areas provide the growth and life of a tree. After the bark, there is the cambium, which provides the tree with nutrients to sustain it and to grow. The next inward section is called the xylem, which is composed of the sapwood that transports water up the tree through many minute pipes. The central section of the tree is called the heartwood. The sapwood is lighter in color than the heartwood. Resins, oils, and minerals, which are deposited in the wood as the tree grows, cause the heartwood's darker color.

In determining the age of a tree, he noted that in the

cross section of the trunk are rings, each of which represents a year of life. Some are larger than others, indicating the amount of water and food that the tree was able to derive to sustain itself. Larger rings indicate good years and the thinner rings indicate sparser growth years where food supplies were wanting.

Stokka noted that there were many enemies to trees. Some are lightning, drought, man, sparse soil. Worst of all are the ever-present beetles that thrive on healthy trees. When a beetle finds a tree that is an excellent food source, it emits pheromones. Pheromones are naturally occurring odorless substances that the beetle excretes externally, conveying an airborne signal that tells other beetles that this tree is very nutritious and is providing lots of food.

The beetles are harmful to the trees because they carry blue stain fungus. The fungus spores germinate and produce mycelium, a sticky substance that is deposited in the sapwood as a beetle bores into the tree. This fungus eventually blocks the nutrient-conducting columns of trees, starving them of nutrients and eventually causing the tree to die of starvation.

Stokka said that in the late 1800s the Black Forest section of the Palmer Divide had been denuded of all pine growth because the wood was used for construction in



Photo of Terry Stokka by Bernard Minetti.

Denver. All the trees now standing in Black Forest are "new growth."

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Oct. 18, at 7 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. The public is invited to attend. The title of the presentation is "Railroads of the Pikes Peak Region." Mel McFarland will provide a look at the different railroads that served our area.

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September and October library events

All Pikes Peak Reads the focus of many programs

By Harriet Halbig

This year's All Pikes Peak Reads program kicked off at the What If? Festival on Sept. 15. Since then, there have been a number of programs at the Monument Library on the theme of "Survival Against All Odds."

The first of these was the meeting of the Monumental Readers as they discussed *The Unthinkable* by Amanda Ripley, followed by a screening of the PBS video *Surviving Disaster*, based on the book. Several of those attending had been personally affected by disaster, as during the Berry fire on Mount Herman in 1988 or the evacuation due to an acid spill on the railroad tracks a few years ago. Seeing these case studies helped them to understand their reactions and prepare for future emergencies.

The following day, Kathryn Russell of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office spoke on the subject of surviving disaster and provided a number of publications about formulating a personal plan for disaster—what to pack, what to have on hand if you are unable to get out for several days, and how to notify family of your whereabouts in the case of evacuation and other issues.

Adult programs

On Thursday, Oct. 4, from 3 to 5 p.m., join author Linda Weaver Clarke and learn how to turn your family history into a collection of legends. By bringing your ancestors to life, your children will get to know them in a new way.

On Friday, Oct. 5, from 9 until noon, join certified

fund-raising executive RoMa Johnson as she explores various concerns for nonprofit organizations. Among these are visitors and volunteers, boards and bosses, reporting of results and accountability, and tools and teamwork. Please contact the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce at 481-3282 to register for this informative seminar.

The Monumental Readers will meet on Friday, Oct. 19, at 10 a.m. to discuss *Room* by Emma Donoghue. All patrons are welcome to attend this monthly book group.

The AARP Mature Safe Driving Program will be offered on Saturday, Oct. 20, from 1 to 5 p.m. This is a driver refresher course designed for motorists age 50 and older. Graduates may present their completion certificate to their insurance agent for a discount. Charge for the four-hour course is \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for nonmembers. Class size is limited and registration is required.

On Sunday, Oct. 21, at 2 p.m. join Deborah Worthey, local entrepreneur and creative craft genius, for *Cozy Fall Creations—Pinterest in Person*. Fill your head with new and exciting ideas for the season. Registration is encouraged at 488-2370.

Teen programs

Teens and adults are invited to learn how to craft the perfect college essay by attending a program with Robert Cronk, author of the popular book, *Concise Advice: Jump-starting Your College Admission Essay*. The program will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 11.

Crafty Teens will meet on Wednesday, Oct. 10, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., to make survival bracelets. These bracelets relate to the All Pikes Peak Reads theme of survival because they could be put to use as fishing lines, tourniquets, a snare, or a number of other things. Enjoy a snack while you make your bracelet. Register online or call 488-2370.

Children's programs

October's Family Fun program is *Survivors* from Mill Dog Rescue. Meet some furry friends and learn about this organization and the dogs it cares for. Enjoy a cuddle with the dogs and make a craft. Saturday, Oct. 13, at 1:30.

On Monday, Oct. 14, from 4:30 to 6, enjoy *Cool Science Legos Robots*. Come build your own robot using Legos Mindstorms and program it to perform tasks and to move on a playing field! Presented by the Center for STEM Education at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs as part of the weeklong Cool Science Festival Oct. 13-21. For students grades 3 to 6; registration is required online or at 488-2370.

The Lego Club will meet from 10:30 to noon on Saturday, Oct. 20. We'll provide the Legos and you bring the creativity. Be sure to bring your camera, because all pieces used remain the property of the Pikes Peak Library District.

Join us for *Fabulous Friday Fun* on Friday, Oct. 26, at 4 p.m. This program is suggested for middle elementary students and middle school students.

Tuesday, Oct. 30, is Pumpkin Day at the library.

Come at 10:30 a.m. to hear pumpkin stories and decorate your own real pumpkin to take home.

Intergenerational programs

Teens and adults are invited to *BookEaters* on Wednesday, Oct. 10, from 4 to 5:30 to discuss *The Unthinkable* by Amanda Ripley and view the PBS film based on the book. Why do some people survive disaster while others don't?

The Tri-Lakes Friends of the Library will host an intergenerational tea on Saturday, Oct. 13, at the Palmer Lake Town Hall from 2 to 3:30 p.m. All are welcome from ages 5 to 99. Wear your Sunday best and bring your own, unique tea cup. There will be treats and activities that all can enjoy. Space is limited! Register online or call 481-2370.

Save the date in November

Join Monument's own international bestselling author Kevin J. Anderson on Sunday, Nov. 11, at 2 p.m.

Anderson has written over 120 books for series such as *Star Wars*, *Dune*, and *Batman*. He will talk of his life-long goal to become a writer and the development of his career.

On the walls during October will be photographs by David Vessey. In the display case will be empty pottery bowls to highlight the Empty Bowl Dinner to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares.

Palmer Lake Library events

Research has shown that young readers can improve their fluency by reading to a quiet and patient dog. Read with Misty the sheltie on Thursday, Oct. 11, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Read with Kirby, our golden retriever friend, on Saturday, Oct. 27, from 11 a.m. until noon. Read to a dog and select a prize.

The Palmer Lake Knitting Group meets each Thursday from 10 a.m. until noon. Bring your project and share fellowship with knitters who are happy to assist as you improve your knitting skills. Call 481-2587 for more information.

Come hear *Not So Scary Stories* on Friday, Oct. 26, at 3:30. Celebrate Halloween with fun and lots of laughs with stories and activities. This activity is for all ages.

In a dark, dark room lit only by candlelight, stories and special effects will send chills and shivers up your spine with tongue-in-cheek tales. *Stories in the Dark* is a fright night intended for brave souls age 8 and up at the Palmer Lake Town Hall, Friday, Oct. 26, at 7 p.m.

The Palmer Lake Book Group welcomes new members to its monthly book club. Meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the first Friday of each month. Please call 481-2587 for the current selection.

View photographs by Laurisa Rabins on the walls of the library during October.

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